

THE Christian Messenger.

NO. 21.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1819.

VOL. I.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xxiii. 34.

Extracts from a letter written in the year 1730, by Nathaniel Lardner, D. D. Continued from page 78.

“Obj. 1. It may be said: Admitting this notion of our Saviour’s person, we shall lose that great instance of humiliation, and condescension, which the *Arian* scheme sets before us. For according to that, the most exalted spirit, next to God the Father, submits to all the laws of infancy and childhood, and is greatly incommoded by the body, during its dwelling in this earth.

“To which I answer, I would by no means rob you, or any one else, of any argument, that is really suited to engage to humility in particular, or to all virtue in general. But PAPINIAN, if I am not mistaken, it appears from what was before said, that this instance of humiliation is an imaginary thing. It is impossible, that so exalted a spirit should be the soul of the human body. If it is not an absolute contradiction, it is incongruous to the nature of things, and in the highest degree improbable.

“And if so great a being were to inhabit a human body, it would entirely swallow it up. That spirit would still retain its own knowledge and power, and would raise the body above all pains, weaknesses and wants.

“Whatever advantages may be fancied on the *Arian* scheme, there are much greater inconveniences attending it. For, as before hinted, it deprives us of the force of our Saviour’s example. We are common men. But he is supposed to be the most perfect spirit, next to God. How should any temptation, from the things of this world, affect such a being? How should he be tempted, in all respects, as we are? It could not be. It is altogether irrational.

“But there are many great advantages in supposing Jesus Christ to be a man, consisting of soul and body. His example is then justly set before us in all the strength and beauty, with which it now appears in the gospels and epistles of the New Testament.

“It is also upon the ground of this scheme alone, that the expectation of attaining to a glory, like that of Jesus Christ, can be supported. For which, however, there is a plain encouragement in the doctrine of the gospel. John xvii. 21—26. Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. Rev. iii. 21. and elsewhere.

“These are the most glorious, the most animating hopes that can be conceived. They excite to faithfulness and zeal beyond expression. We may be made like unto Jesus Christ hereafter, if we will but follow his example, and resemble him now. But how can we admit the thought of being near to him, in the future state, who besides the merits of his obedience and sufferings here, has, in the *Arian* hypothesis, the glory of being employed by God in things of a quite different nature, such as creating this visible world, and all the angels, and invisible hosts of heaven.

“And is not this one reason of our slothfulness, and other faults? The truth is not in us; the words of Christ do not abide in us. We suffer ourselves to be deluded, and perverted from the truth and simplicity of the gospel, by the philosophical schemes of speculative men. And so, almost any man may take our crown. Rev. iii. 11.

“I believe, PAPINIAN, that you, as well as other serious Christians, desire, with the Apostle Paul, to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection. Philip. iii. 10. But what is there extraordinary in the resurrection of Christ according to the *Arian* hypothesis? Is it any thing extraordinary, that the

Logos (in the *Arian* sense of that word) should raise the body, in which he has acted, and suffered for a while? He might be supposed to have an especial regard for that body, and be willing to make it glorious. But I do not see, that such a resurrection can so fully assure us of our own, as if we suppose Christ to be a man like unto us. For then his resurrection is a pattern of ours. Which is the doctrine of the New Testament. 1 Cor. xv. 20—23. and the glorious argument of St. Paul, Eph. i. 17—23. Hereby we are indeed assured of our resurrection. God the Father, who gave his own Son for us, and raised him up from the dead, will, most certainly, raise up us also, as it is expressed, 2 Cor. iv. 14. *Knowing, that he who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.* And see Philip. iii. 20. 21. In a word, here is the best foundation of unmoveable confidence in God. And the apostle expressly says in the place just referred to in 1 Cor. xv. 21. *Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

(Concluded in our next Number.)

—O—
FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

“I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit would fail before me, and the souls which I have made. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall say, in Jehovah have I righteousness and strength: to him shall come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.” Isaiah, lvii. 16. xlv. 23, 24.

There is, perhaps, no subject upon which the majority of mankind entertain less correct ideas, than that of pun-

ishment for sin. Properly to understand it, requires an accurate knowledge of the character of God, the nature of his laws, and the relationship which he bears in all his dispensations towards his creature, man. As long as either of these are misunderstood, so long will the nature and intent of Divine punishment be also misunderstood.

All punishment, it is evident, must be intended to produce one or other of the following effects, or otherwise its infliction degenerates into the mere gratification of a spirit of revenge, from which no benefit can be derived, either by the offender, or the person offended against, viz.

1st. It must be of such a nature, that its *anticipation* shall be sufficient to deter mankind from the commission of sin—or, 2ndly, Its *infliction* must reform the sinner, by bringing him to a proper sense of the enormity of his conduct, and render him unwilling, in future, to continue in the commission of crime—or, lastly, It must consist in placing the offender under circumstances, or in such a situation, as shall prevent him from the commission of sin.

Let us now examine the doctrine of endless misery, as preached by the majority of Christian Divines, as a punishment for sin, and endeavour to discover how far it will produce either of the above effects; or whether, indeed, it will produce them at all.

1st. In considering a penal law, emanating from a human legislature, if we find it to produce in the greater majority of instances, the desired effect, we conclude it to be good: man being, from the limited nature of all his faculties, incapable of producing any law, so framed, as to anticipate the circumstances of the disposition and character of every individual on whom it is intended to operate. But, with respect to the laws of God—it is far otherwise: being infinite in wisdom, he could adopt no one, that would not be able in every instance to produce its intended end, and being also infinite in power, the law thus adopted, must be carried fully into effect, there being nothing whatever in the universe that could possibly oppose it. The Deity deals directly with the spirits of men—he turns the stubborn disposition which way he will, and planting a portion of his divine nature in the heart of

the creature, he bids defiance to every temptation of the adversary.

To prove, therefore, a punishment intended to prevent sin, to have its origin with God, it must in every instance produce this effect. Let me now ask the question—does the doctrine of endless misery prevent the continuance of sin in the world? The cells of our prisons, the records of our courts, our consciences, all reply in the negative.

It will not do to say that *many sinners* have been induced, by the preaching of the doctrine, to desert the broad road that leads to destruction; if any remain, upon whom it hath no influence, it is an evidence that the doctrine has no higher origin than in man's fallible wisdom. The law of God, assert the Scriptures, is perfect, converting the soul.

But even granting, That, trembling from a selfish fear of consequences, the majority of mankind were to abstain from the commission of crime; is this service of fear, the service required of them by their maker? Is there in it any of that love which delivers us from fear and all its selfish consequences? Is there in it any of that spirit which abhors sin from its own intrinsic demerits, and loves righteousness for righteousness sake? If not, it is the service of devils, and not of the children of God. The heart is still corrupt—the desire for evil still continues, and is only kept within bounds from mere motives of self-preservation.

(Concluded in our next)

Christian Messenger.

Philadelphia, Saturday, Dec. 25, 1819.

CONTROVERSIAL.

I do not think R. C. will again ask as in page 59, column 1, if the devil took the mountain with him, for in column 2, of the same page he seems sensible of its impropriety. In the same column, he asks if I will admit that Jesus was actually deceived? I answer, NO.

He very properly observes in the same column, that "sin does not consist in being tempted; but in giving way to temptation, which Jesus did not; therefore he was tempted yet without sin." Upon what grounds, then, did he assert, that "If T. admit that Jesus was actually tempted by

what was not in reality true, he must admit that Jesus was actually deceived with a mere false shew!" when he perfectly knew that R. C. nor T. admitted that Jesus was deceived, or gave way to temptation? Did he make this, which it was scarcely possible for him not to know was a groundless assertion, for the purpose of building upon it the following alternative, in the same column, "Now sooner than admit this (that Jesus was deceived,) had we not better admit that there is greater probability of our being deceived in regard to the entity of the devil?" I must leave him to explain his motives.

Remark.—Here it becomes necessary to inform our readers, that we did, and do still conceive it to have been impossible, in the very nature of things, for Christ to have been, as it is now impossible for any one to be, tempted by any object whatever, out of himself, unless he was actually *deceived* by that object. Any object, out of ourselves, which has no power to deceive, has no power to tempt: and whoever is tempted by an object which does not deceive, it is because his *lust* burns *within*; in which case, the *object* is perfectly innocent. We might illustrate this principle by a variety of examples; but believing it correct, and that it will apply in all cases whatever, we shall not make it any more plain, unless the principle be denied. Hence, it will follow, and we may as well make the application direct as not, that if Jesus was tempted by any devil, *out of the infirmities of human nature*, he must have been actually deceived! A servant, who is under a very kind master, is accosted by a man, saying, "Come, go with me, and I will give you all your heart can wish." The servant knows his character, and knows him to be, not only a notorious liar, but as great a tyrant as ever lived. Has he any power, when the servant possesses this knowledge, to *tempt* him to leave his kind and good master, and go off with the tyrant? Let common sense dictate the answer. But only suppose the servant deceived, and it might have been otherwise. E.D.

In the same page, column 3, R. C. says, "respecting the demons, I will only ask, whose organs did they make use of when they were supposed to speak? their own, or the organs of those who were supposed to be possessed by them."

When he has considered Matth. 10. 20. *It is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you,* and discovered whose organs were to be employed, the organs of the spirit of the Father, or the organs of the messengers, he will not likely repeat his question. In Acts, 19. 15. we read, *And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?* does any man doubt that it was through the organs of the man in whom the evil spirit was?

Remark.—We can assure T. that R. C. was serious in the questions, which he proposed, which were real difficulties in his mind, and therefore were not proposed merely to perplex his much respected opponent: and we are equally serious in informing him, that the difficulties are by no means removed by the passages which we have been requested to consider. That God, who is omnipresent, can speak in and through the organs of his creatures, we are very ready to admit; but then, unless the testimony be accompanied by some evidence, more than simply the voice of the creature, we have no right to believe it as the voice of God. That God did speak by Christ and his apostles, was clearly shewn by the works which they performed, whereby God bore testimony that their words were true, and approved by him. But how does this show, or prove, that one created being can speak in and through the organs of another created being? and unless the dæmons were created beings, what were they? The power of speaking by or with the organs of another person, we do not believe exists in any created being; nor in any being, except Him who is omnipresent; and we cannot conceive of but one such being in the universe. Therefore we do not hesitate to state explicitly, that it is our opinion, that the language of the New Testament, in this particular, conformed to the popular notions of that day, which Jesus did not think proper to undertake to correct. ED.

I have been accustomed to have great veneration for the Scriptures, and it always grieves me to find a man who has a claim to seriousness, attempting to treat subjects in the Scriptures with ridicule, either by foolish syllogisms, which are only sophistry, or by ridiculous questions, which are unprofitable and vain. If a serious man who differs

from me, wishes to reason seriously from the Scriptures, I am willing to meet him with equal seriousness and candour; but when recourse is had to ridicule, as it indicates a deficiency of better arguments, I consider it no longer proper for me, and therefore shall decline the farther prosecution of these subjects.

Remark.—If R. C. has been guilty of the charges here alleged against him, he is guilty indeed. He can only say that he is not sensible of it; and whenever it shall be pointed out, where-in he has blundered in such odious crimes, he will endeavour to make all the atonement he can by a speedy retraction. We should have been much better pleased, however, if, instead of these charges, the errors had been pointed out in the spirit of meekness, and brotherly love, that he might have had an opportunity to retract them before there should have been an attempt to hold up his character to public censure: or, if he must have been charged with these things, that the charges should have been accompanied with all the supposed evidence there is in this case to support the facts. We can reply in the language of one who has recently met with a similar attack, and who, as we presume, felt as we feel in this case. "To be guilty of sophistry and cavilling," and we may add here, of having recourse to ridicule, making *foolish syllogisms*, and asking *ridiculous questions* which are *unprofitable and vain*, "on any subject, about which we would consent to write, would surely render ourselves odious in our own sight: much more should we feel the weight of guilt, did we find ourselves chargeable with these things, when treating on the momentous subject of religion. Such is our deep abhorrence of what this writer has charged us with, that we are inclined to believe, if he entertained the same, he would be loth to charge us, as he has, especially as he has brought no proof of the facts."

After all, we do not blame T. for reprobating this conduct, if he really believes R. C. to have been guilty of such enormities; but it would have pleased us much better, if the evidence of an attempt "to treat subjects in the Scriptures with ridicule," had been explicitly stated: and also, if he had shown something on the face of those

syllogisms which constitutes them, in his mind, "*foolish!*" He should also have shown, how it appeared that the arguments were "only sophistry!" and what questions had been asked, which were "*ridiculous, unprofitable, and vain!*"* If all this had been shown, we must have replied as we could.

Lest we should be still misunderstood, we here explicitly state, that we agree with T. in admitting that Jesus was *not* deceived: hence we contend, that the temptation must have been caused or produced wholly from what he felt in himself, let the outward circumstances be what they might; which feeling he could no more avoid, than he could avoid being what he was, i. e. *the man Christ Jesus.* ED.

—O—
FROM THE UNIVERSALIST MAGAZINE.

A Dialogue between a Universalist and a Limitarian, or a believer in the endless misery of some of the human race.

(Continued from last Number.)

Lim. It must be acknowledged that this division is now grown to what we hoped it never would attain; and it is a fact that there are first rate talents deeply engaged on both sides; and at present there appears no favourable signs of reconciliation.

Uni. There is one thing that seems not a little remarkable, which many have noticed; and that is, that the clergy should agree so well in their anathemas against Universalists, and yet at the same time those who profess Calvinism, will say that Universalism is not so dangerous as this doctrine which denies the trinity, and is called liberal; while those who hold to the last mentioned doctrine, say boldly, that Universalism is not half so erroneous as the Calvinistic scheme of partial election; but after all, they try to keep up the appearance of fellowship, while neither of them will extend it towards the Universalists.

Lim. We that believe in the Calvinistic doctrine, are of opinion that the Universalists, who openly profess, and publicly maintain, their belief, are more honest than those who profess what

* The question respecting the mountain, page 50, column 1, we are willing to take back, as it was not so distinctly observed, when it was asked, that T. admitted any deception on the part of the devil; and we cannot see now, what use the deception was in the temptation, as in answer to the question, whether Jesus was actually deceived, he says, "NO!"

they are pleased to call liberal sentiments, and yet deny Universalism, for the fact is, they are Universalists in disguise. They deny total depravity and the infinity of sin, and that is Universalism. For if the demerit of sin be not infinite, endless condemnation is unjust.

Uni. It really seems unaccountable how those who deny the infinite demerit of sin should think of maintaining the awful doctrine of endless punishment, but yet we had better cherish the belief that they are honest while they make these pretensions; because if we allow ourselves to suppose that all who are inconsistent with their own creed are dishonest, we shall condemn every body as dishonest, but ourselves, while others following our example, will condemn us in the same way.—Even the Orthodox Calvinist is accused of inconsistency; for he holds that Christ made an infinite atonement for sin; he also acknowledges the truth of the Scriptures, and they assert that Christ gave himself a ransom for all men, tasted death by the grace of God for every man, and is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; and yet he holds that millions of the human race are doomed, by a decree of divine justice, to everlasting misery! You, sir, will not deny that all those for whom the Saviour gave himself a ransom, are heirs of his grace, and you cannot deny that he gave himself a ransom for all men, and yet you contend that to believe that all men are the heirs of his grace is erroneous and dangerous. Now, while you hold to this direct contradiction, and yet are honest, why may not those who deny the infinity of sin and total depravity, hold to endless punishment and yet be honest?

Lim. I believe, on the whole, as we are more apt to see the inconsistencies of others than our own, it is more safe to refrain from judging one another; and to endeavour to examine our own views, and the consistency of our own doctrines. I confess it is rather difficult to reconcile those plain declarations of Scripture, with what we conceive to be an essential doctrine of the Scriptures, viz. the doctrine of particular election and reprobation. But it is generally thought among us, that the words *all* and *every*, in the passages you have recited, may be properly li-

imited, and that they ought to be limited, in order to agree with the Scriptures generally.

Uni. If, in order to bring these passages, above quoted, to agree with the Scriptures generally, their unlimited terms are to be limited, then the Scriptures generally use limited terms when speaking of the same subject. But is this the case? Do the Scriptures generally speak of the designs of divine mercy, manifested through Jesus Christ, in a way to limit those designs to a few of mankind, and to exclude from the blessings of the doctrine of the cross, the many?

Lim. We certainly read that "many are called, but that few are chosen;" and we read likewise, that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" while we are informed that the gate is wide, and the way broad, that leadeth to destruction, and that many go in thereat.

Uni. It is very true that we read the things you observe; but then it is equally true that these passages have no direct relation to the subject under consideration.—In order for you to justify the suggestion that the passages which assert that Jesus gave himself a ransom for all men, and that he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, ought to have their unlimited terms limited, in order to bring those passages into an agreement with the Scriptures generally, you must show that the general language of Scripture on this subject is limited.

(To be Continued.)

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FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

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Extract of a Letter from a Correspondent in Cincinnati.

"I am anxious for the promulgation of truth delineated plainly and in soberness. The sublime doctrines of the gospel wants but to be stated, to be understood even by the ignorant. Throw off the costly garb of superstitious finery; cast off all bigotry, and raise the doctrine of universal benevolence from the slough of corruption in which it has laid for ages, and show to the nations of the world that God is the common Father of all men."

POETS' CORNER.

Awake my drowsy senses all,
At Jesus' feet submissive fall,
Who conquers sinners great and small,
By his endearing love:
To bruise the serpent's subtle head,
He over death a conquest made—
He rose triumphant from the dead!
And thus he ransom'd ev'ry soul,
To dwell in realms above.

He check'd the persecuting Saul,
That sin no more might him inthrall;
Converted, he became *saint Paul*,
By that effulgent light:
So he will ev'ry sinner bring,
And cleanse their souls from guilt and sin,
That they his praises, loud, may sing,
In yonder world of heav'nly joy,
Of glory shining bright.

This is a faithful saying sure,
That sinners Jesus will restore;
He shed his blood to make them pure,
From ev'ry sinful strife:
Himself a ransom gave for all
Who dwell upon this earthly ball—
Attend and hear his gracious call—
For you the Saviour tasted death,
To give you endless life.

Then shout aloud his praises high!
The word of life is ever nigh—
For Jesus lives no more to die!
This is the sacred word:
At God's right hand—a glorious seat!
His enemies beneath his feet,
In humble supplication meet—
Dispensing pardons—lo! he sits,
And reigns superior Lord!

K.

—O—
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